GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:1242
ANSWERED ON:08.03.2002
EXPANSION OF TRADE WITH RUSSIA AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES
T. GOVINDAN

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government have a proposal for expansion of trade with Russia and neighbouring countries;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the areas identified for this purpose; and

(d) the specific steps being taken in this direction?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDY)

(a) and (b): It has been the constant endeavour of the Government to expand and enhance the trade with Russia and neighbouring countries.

(c) and (d): Apart from the existing export items to Russia, viz, RMG Cotton including accessories, Tea, Drugs, Pharmaceuticals & Fine Chemicals, Coffee, RMG Wool, Cotton Yarn, Fabrics, made ups, Tobacco, etc., and import items from Russia, viz., Fertilizers, Iron & Steel. Non-ferrous metals, Newsprint, Coal, Machinery and Primary Steel, etc., a number of steps are being taken for identifying new areas of co-operation and to increase the bilateral trade with Russia. Efforts are also being made to expand trade with neighbouring countries, viz., Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Afghanistan. The various measures taken are as under:-

(i) During the 8th Session of the Indo-Russian Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation held at New Delhi in February 2002, both sides agreed to take necessary measures to ensure sustainable growth and continue diversification of mutual trade;

(ii) Promotion of dialogue with the Russian side including discussions at the highest level;

(iii) Constant review of bilateral trade through the Joint Commission mechanism with its Working Group on Trade and Economic Cooperation and various Sub-Groups on Transport, Banking and Financial Matters, and Agriculture;

(iv) Facilitating through bilateral consultations, the rapid utilisation of debt owed to Russia in the form of export of goods and services;

(v) Except Afghanistan, our neighbouring countries are also members of SAARC and have been given duty-concessions under SAPTA with the ultimate aim of having a duty-free trade regime in South Asia.

(vi) Other steps taken for expansion of trade include promotion of direct business contact through exchange of trade delegations, exchange of commercial information, organising and participation in Buyer-Seller meets, fairs and trade exhibitions and holding Joint Business Council meetings etc.